

GLOUCESTER RUGBY
HERITAGE

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THE DIX DYNASTY

The head of the Gloucester Rugby Dix family was John William, born in Gloucester in 1884, who enjoyed a long and successful career at scrum half, making 243 appearances between 1907 and 1922, and scoring 54 tries.

In subsequent generations, his son, Bill, and four grandsons, John, Stuart and Clive Dix and Gary Mace, all played for Gloucester.

"FATHER" DIX

Throughout his playing career John William was known as "Father" Dix, although he never explained how he came by this nickname, and even his closest friends claimed not to know. He was renowned for ranting at the Gloucester pack in rather colourful language, and for his reverse pass, which was regarded as a masterpiece.

He also had a reputation for stretching the rules – at one game in London, the home crowd shouted "Watch Dix!" to the referee at the first scrum, and as soon as "Father" put the ball in, the referee blew his whistle and shouted "free kick". But "Father" had not released the ball; he had sold a dummy. Dix was seen grinning broadly behind the ref, who insisted on the free kick being taken even though no offence had taken place.



John William "Father" Dix

"Father" played his first game for Gloucester at Exeter on 9th November 1907, and scored a try in a 13-6 victory, but he was competing for the scrum half berth with Dai Gent, an international player, so his place did not become permanent until 1910 when Gent moved to Plymouth.

In 1910-11, "Father" played in 36 of Gloucester's 40 fixtures, and made the trip to France for the Club's famous victory over Toulouse; two years later he played in the success in Paris against Stade Francais. His form attracted the judgement that, "...he

was quite up to International form".

During the Great War, "Father" Dix joined the 8/Gloucesters and landed in France in 1915. He was taken prisoner in April 1918, but released near the Dutch border as the Germans retreated, and he was back in Gloucester in time to play in the Club's Christmas matches. He was soon playing better than ever, and was chosen as reserve for England in all their matches in 1919-20.

For one game at Twickenham, the first choice player, Kershaw, was doubtful because of injury, and 20 minutes before kick-off he had not turned up. "Father" was told to prepare to play. A few minutes later Kershaw arrived, reported himself fit to play,

"Father's" greatest ambition was shattered, and unfortunately that was the closest he ever came to representing England. He continued to be chosen as a travelling reserve, but by 1921 this had happened once too often and he declined to travel to Edinburgh, preferring to turn out for Gloucester against Llanelli.

He played his first game for the County in 1908, and scored two tries in their 39-0 defeat of Racing Club de France at Kingsholm. He was at the heart of the famous Gloucestershire side which won the County Championship in three successive

seasons – 1920, 1921 and 1922.

His 21st and last cap was won in the final at Villa Park in 1922, when North Midlands were defeated 19-0, including a try by "Father".

"BILL" DIX

John William "Bill" Dix, the son of "Father", was born in 1923, and made his debut on the wing for Gloucester on 29th March 1947, when he scored a hat trick of tries in a 27-8 win over the RAF.

He played ten more games for the first team, and scored two more tries. He had three sons, who would all play for the Club.



John Dix

JOHN DIX

John was born in 1947, and followed his father on the wing for Gloucester. He scored a try on his debut in the Boxing Day match against Old Merchant Taylors (his cousin Gary Mace played centre), and made 217 first team appearances between 1966 and 78, scoring 88 tries.

Out of the team for the start of the 1971-72 season, he came into the side for the quarter-final of the inaugural Knockout Cup, with Eric Stephens going from left wing to full-

leading try scorer with 18 tries in 33 games, and made his debut for the County when he deputised for his younger brother, Stuart, in the County Championship quarter-final against Herts. He scored five tries against Exeter in November 1975, and hat tricks against Clifton and Cheltenham.

STUART DIX

Stuart was born in 1952, and

14 tries. Naturally gifted, he quickly impressed as an elusive runner, and in March 1974 he was called up for England Under-23 squad training at Bisham Abbey. He scored the only try in Gloucester's 7-3 victory over Bristol in the first Sunday game at Kingsholm in February 1974, and scored hat tricks against Roundhay and Northampton.

He played for Gloucestershire throughout the Championship winning season of 1974-75, missing only the quarter-final when his brother substituted for him, and scoring the winning try in the 13-9 victory over Eastern Counties in the final.

John Bayliss was Gloucestershire captain that season and played alongside Stuart for Gloucester and Gordon League. He thought him "... the most talented winger, certainly in the West Country... he scored tries for fun, would tackle, brave... in three or four years he would certainly have been an England international and probably been on the Legends Board because he was so talented". But he chose to go back to the Gordon League to play alongside his twin brother, Clive.

CLIVE DIX

Clive Dix, Stuart's twin, played for Gloucester United, but most of his career was as a centre for the Gordon League, where he and Stuart enjoyed a two-year unbeaten run. The run was finally ended in February 1977 when they lost 4-9 away to Bill Beaumont's Fylde in the last 16 of the John Player Cup.

GARY MACE

Gary Mace, a cousin of the Dix brothers who was born in 1941, was another grandson of "Father" Dix and the son of Bill Dix's daughter. He made his Gloucester debut in October 1958, aged 17, and played 14 games that season.

A scrum half with a long pass, who also played at outside half or in the centre, he made 103 appearances for Gloucester between 1958 and 1972. His outstanding season was 1960-61 when, as a 19 year old, he played 34 games in a successful half back partnership with Terry Hopson.

SUNDAY EXPRESS best for all GLOUCESTER Rugby reports

| GLOUCESTER (Red and White) | | Referee: K. Hutton (Gloucestershire Society) | | OLD MERCHANT TAYLORS | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| THE FIRST AID SERVICE ON THIS GROUND IS VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED BY THE CITY OF GLOUCESTER DIVISION ST. JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE | | | | | | | |
| FULL BACK 1 D. Alnge (c) | | FIRST XV FIXTURES Sept. 1 Clifton —H 15-6 3 Northampton —H 16-9 9 Stroud —A 1-6 10 Coventry —A 11-9 15 Gloucester "B" —A 11-9 County Team —H 24-12 17 Moseley —H 19-23 *22 Wolfhounds —H 16-6 24 Bristol —A 3-15 28 Cardiff —A 3-27 Oct. 7 Bradford —H 9-3 6 Cheltenham —H 8-0 8 Worcester —A Can. 10 Ebbw Vale —A 0-13 *15 Ash. Club of Wellington, N.Z. —H 9-6 18 Newport —A 0-11 24 Old Blis —H 8-3 29 Oxford Univ. —A 3-9 Nov. 1 Leicester —H 0-3 12 Moseley —A 14-34 19 Aberystwyth —H 9-8 26 Newbridge —A 3-37 Dec. 3 North —H 6-9 10 Bath —A 16-11 17 Coventry —H 0-0 25 Loughborough —H 0-0 26 O.M.T.'s —H 0-0 27 Pontypool —H 0-0 31 Ebbw Vale —H 0-0 | | FULL BACK 15 D. Cameron | | FIRST XV FIXTURES Jan. 7 Lond. Scottish —H 14 Leicester —A 21 Wasps —A 28 Cambridge Univ. —H Feb. 4 Bristol —H 11 Bath —H 18 Swansea —A 23 Arns —H 25 Aberystwyth —A Mar. 4 Northampton —A 11 R.A.F. —H 16 Pontypool —A 18 Glos. Hospital —H 23 Loughborough —H 27 Sale —H 30 Clifton —A 1 April Cardiff —H 5 Cheltenham —A 8 North —A 10 Newport —H 15 Harlequins —H 19 Stroud —H 22 Penryn —A 26 Exeter —A 27 Newbridge —H | |
| THREEQUARTERS 2 J. Dix R.W. 3 M. Dawson R.C. 4 G. Mace L.C. 5 J. Groves (c) L.W. (Can.) | | HALF BACKS 6 T. Hopson (c) O.H. 7 M. Booth (c) S.H. | | THREEQUARTERS 14 T. Cameron R.W. 13 J. Welch R.C. 12 D. I. Brasier L.C. 11 A. Ducat R.W. | | | |
| FORWARDS 8 J. Fowke (c) 9 P. Keith-Roch 10 C. Teague 11 A. Brinn (c) 12 N. Jackson 13 G. Redding 14 T. Davis 15 R. Smith (c) | | FORWARDS 10 N. Griffin O.H. 9 R. H. Pelham S.H. | | FORWARDS 1 A. Bell 2 J. Fernyhough 3 G. Shilling 4 M. Christie 5 J. Filmer 6 J. Birch 8 G. Brown 7 P. Kitchen | | | |
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Gloucester v OMT Boxing Day 1966 programme

back. John kept his place for the semi, and rounded it off with a try in the final against Moseley at Twickenham.

In 1974-75, John was the Club's

kept up the family tradition on the wing. Although he only played two seasons for Gloucester, 1973-75, he made 33 appearances, and scored